

REMARKS

In response to the restriction requirement set forth in the Office Action, Applicant provisionally elects, with traverse, Species IV for search and substantive examination. Applicant canceled all original claims 1-47, and submits new replacement claims 48 to 94 for examination.

Applicant disagrees with the characterization of the Species and grouping of the original claims in the manner proposed by the examiner. Applicant respectfully submits that the present invention as illustrated by the embodiments shown in the figure should not be subjected to restriction. The Species, as grouped by the examiner, are various embodiments or aspects of the same inventive concept, as now defined by new claim 48. These embodiments (or Species as proposed by the examiner) are NOT obvious variants. However, they are related as embodiments, in the manner that one embodiment generally adds to or overlaps the broader concept of another embodiment.

For example, referring to the figures, the embodiment of Figs. 22-23 is generally directed to multi-channel ferrule and sleeve combination, having protrusion and groove alignment. As such, the embodiment IV of Figs. 22-23 includes the broader aspects of the embodiment III of Figs 17-21 and embodiment VI of Figs. 26-30, which are generally directed to multi-channel ferrule and sleeve combination. Embodiment III on the other hand includes the broader aspects of embodiments I of Figs. 1-10, II of Figs. 11-16, V of Figs. 24-25, VII of Figs. 31-34, VIII of Figs. 35-37 and IX of Figs. 38-39, which are generally directed to ferrule and sleeve combination that includes the embodiments of half ferrules (I, II, VII and VIII) (which may include welding of the half ferrules) and one-piece ferrules (V and VI). Multi-channel embodiment VI on the other hand includes the broader aspects of embodiments I of Figs. 1-10, II of Figs. 11-16, V of

Figs. 24-25, VII of Figs. 31-34, VIII of Figs. 35-37 and IX of Figs. 38-39, which are generally directed to ferrule and sleeve combination (embodiments I, II, VII and VIII), and more specifically one-piece ferrules (embodiment V).

Claims 48 to 94 are readable on the provisionally elected Specie. Independent claim 48 is generic.

Applicant respectfully submits that generic independent claim 48 is patentable, and upon allowance, all the non-elected Species should be entitled to consideration.

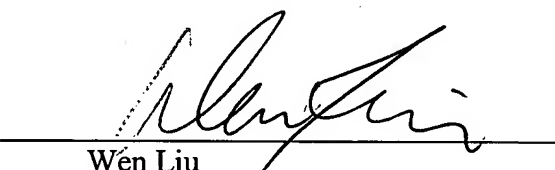
Applicant reserves the right to file a divisional application on the non-elected Species at a later date.

CONCLUSION

In view of all the foregoing, Applicant submits that the claims pending in this application are patentable over the references of record and are in condition for allowance. Such action at an early date is earnestly solicited. **The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned representative to discuss any outstanding issues that may not have been adequately addressed in this response.**

Respectfully submitted,

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